

ANOTHER
S K E T C H
OF THE
REIGN OF GEORGE III.

FROM THE YEAR 1780 to 1790.

BEING
AN ANSWER TO
A S K E T C H, &c.

PART THE FIRST.

D U B L I N:

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ANTHONY

NOTES

OF THE

REIGN OF GEORGE III

FROM THE YEAR 1760 TO 1789

EDITED

AND REVISED BY

A. S. D. C. H. V.



THE Author laments that the crowd of important matter which occupies the beginning of the period which this Sketch proposes to describe, as well as the lateness of the season for publication, does not permit him to deduce his history beyond the dissolution of the parliament in 1784; the work will be comprized in two parts: and the Second Part, which will be the most important from the quantity as well as the quality of the subjects which it will treat of, will be published towards the close of the year, and will be extended to whatever is comprised in the present session of parliament.

113. The first thing that the crowd of important
men should consider the beginning of the period
when the State is to be organized, as well as the
interest of the people for education, does not permit
him to think that the highest of the
education in 1822, the work will be completed in
two years, and the second part, which will be the
most important from the quantity as well as the qual-
ity of the subjects which it will treat of, will be
assigned towards the close of the year, and will be
extended to subjects it is assigned in the present list.
One hundred.

ANOTHER
S K E T C H
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REIGN OF GEORGE III.

TO narrate events in order to afford materials “to some future Hume or Gibbon, to whom Genius shall delegate the sublime task of recording and perpetuating the English annals,” is certainly an undertaking both modest in its purpose, and useful in its execution: and though posterity may not be able to acknowledge this obligation, on account of the uncertainty or the oblivion of its author, yet a present retribution will not fail to attend such an endeavour; and contemporary gratitude will bestow the praise, which the judgment of futurity will not indeed have the means of securing.

But if its laudable to clear the way of the historian, whose steps are doubtfully, though cau-

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tiously traced through the intricacies of conjecture or quite obstructed by the darkness of ignorance,—surely he deserves to be extolled by rapturous gratitude who shall recal the unwary traveller from the paths of error, who shall retard or stop his hardy progress by persuasion, by intreaty, by authority—who shall call aloud “quit the road, unhappy that you are! which you now pursue—it is not among the flowers of panegyric, it is not among the illusions that fancy creates and only interest adopts, that you will find that truth which you seek. Check your rein; proceed not—examine, doubt, consult, judge; weigh motives, trace causes, consider actions relatively to characters, to conjectures, to nature: and though the evidence of tradition should perplex or fail you, philosophy shall yet shed a friendly light, and conduct your steps.”

It is hardly necessary to state, that the avowed intention of this little essay or treatise is to obviate some misrepresentation of things and of characters which have gone abroad in a book or pamphlet, intitled, “A Sketch of the Reign of George the Third,” to refer effects to their proper causes, and to substitute truth for panegyric.

The author proposes, moreover, in the course of his undertaking, to make some observations concerning the nature and the end of government in general, and the nature of the British Government in particular. What is its theory! what is its practice! what its capacity for duration! what is its

its essential character ! and what the influence of this character in the production of a system of conduct, which, when it has continued uniform for a length of time, must be the effect of a constant cause. This latter object, however, he shall refer to the second part of this treatise, and he hopes to receive the indulgence of the public, if he does not make a hasty production of opinions that require much reflection in their adoption, and much delicacy in their promulgation.

In tracing the affairs of men it will generally be found, that any great deviation from the rules of prudence and of justice may be considered as a kind of first link in that continued chain of events which is certain to terminate in some fatal catastrophe, and though properly speaking there is no such thing in all human affairs as a first cause, that which is called so, being as strictly dependant upon some event which has preceded it, as its own immediate effect is dependant upon it, and that which is called the final effect or catastrophe being most certainly a necessary cause with respect to some succeeding event ; yet, because, the connection in either case is not quite so apparent to the dull sense of man, as it is with respect to all the intermediate events ; so we term this continued sensible chain a series, and from hence the epoch of the historian receives its denomination. That the American war was a measure of impolicy the event has sufficiently demonstrated, that it was a measure founded in injustice, and in

a spirit of domination, is yet a question among those whom national partiality would incline to a favourable judgment, though it is no question among those whom the same motive would incline to a contrary decision: but leaving this discussion aside, certain it is that the surrender of the southern enemy at York-Town was a kind of final effect of that measure, since from that time a new order of things has arisen, by which a different object is proposed, and of which the events that now pass before us form a part of another connected chain or series.

What were the motives which induced Lord North to resign his situation of minister in March 1782, and subsequent to that surrender, it is not perhaps so difficult a task to conjecture as the sagacious author of the Sketch seems to imagine. That minister probably considered that the war in which the nation had been unhappily involved with America was the prevailing feature, and indeed the grand principle of his administration, of which all the other parts were but subordinate, and dependant as it were upon that measure: when therefore the House of Commons manifested its disapprobation of that war, when a resolution was carried against its continuance, and when it was even not opposed when moved, that which ever of his majesties ministers should advise its continuance, should be deemed enemies of the country, and of his majesty, when all this was done not in a single movement of passion,
not

not upon the sudden impulse of a great and grievous calamity, but after much intervention of time, much temperate deliberation, and by many successive resolutions, we can find but little to wonder at or admire, wherefore a minister whose whole administration had been thus involved in one general censure, from whom the confidence of Parliament had been withdrawn, and who consequently would have been able to do no one ministerial act, should resign his office, should retire into the ranks, nor think it painful to submit to a necessity which he could not control.

It therefore required no very great portion of sagacity even for the author of the Sketch to discover the motives of the resignation of Lord North, when he found that his measures had been disapproved of by the Commons, and that he was deemed the author, the instigator, or the instrument, by which the nation had fallen into so great a calamity. Nor though the favour and SUPPORT OF THE CROWN had remained to him, should "the announcing his resignation or stripping himself of the insignia of office," under these circumstances of public disapprobation "have so much astonished the audience as to make them doubt the fact of which they were witnesses."

But yet that minister did not wait for any extreme resolutions before he relinquished his place, *he* did not set the gratification of his ambition or his lust of power against the sense directly expressed

pressed of the representatives of the nation, *he* did not stake his continuance in office against the order and the tranquillity of the country upon the credit of the moderation of a popular assembly;—but with the dignity of a man, and with the virtue of a patriot, he resigned his office, rather than he would countenance so pernicious a precedent that it could be *retained*, although it might be granted, without the concurrence of the people expressed by its only organ, namely, the House of Commons legally and constitutionally assembled and existing.

It has been frequently asserted, and it has been too often proved by experience, that the conduct of political men is more directed by interest or convenience, more guided by conjectures, than governed by any general immutable principles of public virtue; and such deviations from moral rectitude so long as the public only is concerned, are *imputed* with levity and received with indulgence, though if they should affect the private transactions of life, contempt or reproach would be a never failing consequence of the base proceeding. If we seek for the cause of a distinction where none ought to exist, or where it ought to exist in an inverse manner; for the practice of private morality must be at last traced up to public utility as its proper and original source, and public utility is indeed directly and immediately affected by the practice of public virtue; I say, if we seek for the causes of this distinction,

we shall discover them in the vanity, and in the pride and in the desire of superiority which are implanted in mankind. No particular injury can be done to an individual without vesting in that individual a right of complaint and reproach, a right of which nature will compel the exercise, and the exercise of which is not very well calculated to gratify the vanity, and feed the pride of him who is the object of it. But in the case of a public injury no particular individual has a right to complain beyond the rest of his fellow citizens, and as the universality of an injury prevents an insult, so one great, the greatest source of human resentment, is not concerned in the revenge.

Hence it is that private promises are ever deemed sacred even by those who make no scruple of violating public faith, not indeed from the virtue of their characters, but from the vice of their nature; hence too those political men who, while they have been in opposition to a powerful administration, have maintained with great zealousness the expediency of a retrenchment in the public expenditure, of a reduction of places, and of a diminution of influence; when they have been seated on the side of power, have forgot their airy promises, have retrenched no part of the public expenditure, have reduced no places, and have diminished no influence, governed by the same interest, that under different circumstances and in a different conjuncture had betrayed them into professions

professions which were the effect of a shifting convenience.

The whole nation anxiously wishes for a parliamentary reform: The representation is defective, it is incomplete, and single individuals, by that change to which all human affairs are subject, have possessed themselves gradually, and without effort, of the dearest rights of large bodies of men. What more popular than for a member of sufficient abilities, to come forward to vindicate the injured constitution, and to assert the claims of the public. But what more for his interest too? if he succeeds he brings down the minister from his vantage ground, and in the scramble, I should rather call it the allotment which will now take place, he will have a fair chance in the gratification of an honest ambition, in proportion to his talents, and let me add to his virtue too; and his particular merits upon such an occasion would most certainly not be forgotten. But let a fortunate train of circumstances make this man minister: Will he pursue that object of his heart which but now he burned for with all the flames of a lover? Has he not the very means of attaining it? or does the certainty of possession impose its icy hand upon this species of desire, and render him indifferent because it is in his power to be happy. But it is not necessary to search for remote causes upon such an occasion. The times have changed, and our opinions also have changed. There are disturbances abroad—there may be disaffection at home

home—let us not stir up bad humours by the introduction of new things, and let us prefer the security of prescription to the dangers of innovation.

In opposition to the foregoing observations concerning political frailty, and the truth of which must be generally acknowledged; let me direct the attention of the reader to the conduct of the administration which immediately succeeded upon the resignation of Lord North. An administration most honourably distinguished by the name of Rockingham; and whose existence though it continued for no more than three months, a circumstance of great exultation to the author of the Sketch, could not be called short, for if duration is relative to succession, that life which is crowded with good acts is both glorious and long.

In order that we may obtain the clue by which the conduct of this administration was guided, by which its consistency is proved, and its virtue exemplified, it will be necessary to recur to a very memorable event in the former parliament. Upon a question moved by Mr. Dunning, it was carried that the influence of the crown had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished. This solemn declaration however of the representatives of the people was attended with no beneficial effects, for a speedy dissolution that his majesty was advised to make, intercepted the advantage which the public would probably have derived from the virtue or the repentance of that parliament: I say the repentance, because it is remarkable that
this

this abstract proposition (and let it be observed once for all, that the term * abstract signifies the result which is obtained from the contemplation of particulars) was voted by a Parliament that in *no particular* had opposed the measures of the minister; and therefore its theory upon this occasion might be said to be at variance with its practice: a circumstance that adds a very peculiar authority to the proposition which was affirmed; in as much as it is not usual with men to grant any inference from their conduct, which inference implies a censure, unless they are compelled to it by the obligation of truth.

* It is to be observed, that the terms abstract, philosophy, metaphysics, &c. have been much confounded of late, and endeavoured to be brought into disrepute by those who could only expect to succeed in perverting reason, by confounding terms. The author of the letter upon the French Revolution, speaking of rights, &c. says, their abstract perfection is their practical defect: now, abstract perfection can only arise from practical excellency; and, it is, indeed, from the contemplation and knowledge of individuals alone, that we are able to combine various qualities, so as to complete and harmonize any system whatever, whether of mechanics or of ethics, and the effects and the value of a system so framed, may be most precisely ascertained, by resolving it into its elementary parts. Now it is this capacity, which is in individuals, or in the qualities of individuals, to be combined and adapted, that gives rise to the philosophical expression of fitness of things, an expression, which, though Fielding has very successfully ridiculed, by a ludicrous incident in the life of Square, which all my readers will probably recollect, is not the less just upon that account, and this circumstance may serve to prove that ridicule is not always the test of truth.

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But when his Majesty, *in compliance with the wishes of his people*, had framed a new administration, that was informed by the experience, and guided by the gentle ascendant of the Marquis of Rockingham, and of which, if we consider some at least (unhappily not all) of the other component parts, we shall find genius adorned with simplicity, virtue, tried by perseverance and fortitude, proof against temptation, and the allurements of interest; the nation was not deceived in the just expectation which it entertained of such men, and we shall see, in this part of our history, a very splendid exception to the inconsistency and perfidy of political men, who make their own convenience the measure of their professions and of their practice.

The disposal of many offices, an extensive patronage, the influence of the treasury, in the election of members of parliament, an influence, the very suspicion of which should be carefully avoided, and its practice abhorred; all these things, as they are advantages on the side of the minister, as they secure friendship by the impulse of gratitude, as they procure support by the allurements of expectation, and as they render parliament dependant by the operation of both, so that administration which should, relinquish whatever, of patronage, is inconsistent with the integrity of the constitution, which should submit the power of doing ill to be retrenched by salutary provisions, while it retained the power of doing good not only by the natural prevalency of good
over

over ill, but by preserving as many supports as would crush faction, and render the conduct of affairs easy and enviable, would deserve the thanks of the present age, and would receive the admiration of posterity.

The reader will easily conceive that I allude to two memorable acts that past during that administration, by one of which though it was posterior to the other in date, officers of the revenue were disabled from voting for members of Parliament, and consequently one great fountain of undue influence entirely dried up, to the great benefit of the public, but to the greater ease of that class of citizens who consented to their disqualification when they retained their places, and who are now no longer obliged to sacrifice their prepossessions, their feelings, their friendships, and their conscience at the shrine of power, in order that they might not lose those wages which the discharge of their duty deserved, but only their corruption could secure.

The other act was more particularly known by the name of Mr. Burke's Reform Bill, before it became a law. By this act a saving was made of 72,000l. a year, by the retrenchment of offices; a saving of great importance, considered in that single view: but of the greatest importance, when considered relatively to its effects in restoring in some degree that independency of parliament, without which the nation, though it may enjoy the form of a free constitution, will, upon that account,

count, be only plunged in a more hopeless slavery.

But, says the author of the Sketch, whose gentle tones have, upon this occasion, sharpened into invective, "This was a Bill which disarmed every succeeding Minister, by leaving him scarcely any objects by which to stimulate activity, or to reward merit and *adherence*. A Bill which, by compelling every Administration, from want of offices, to multiply the peerage, as the only thing left in their power to bestow, and which, if not redressed and repealed, may eventually destroy the balance of the constitution; a Bill, &c. &c.

That the progressive multiplication of the peerage does not only bid fair, but is certain to destroy the balance of the constitution is a point I shall not dispute with the author of the Sketch; and as it is one of the very few points, I might say the only one, in which I do agree with that author, I am the more particular in stating this conformity of opinion, as well for its singularity, as because it is some proof that I do not disagree with him necessarily, but only because I think I have reason to do so upon all other occasions. But though I admit of his conclusion, respecting the danger of the constitution, from a multiplication of the peerage; yet the other conclusion, for the sake of which the former was inadvertently made, namely, that therefore Mr. Burke's Reform Bill merited the detestation of any other description of persons, but of those who have lost every

every honest feeling, in a base subserviency to a Court or to a Minister, I do most strenuously oppose.

When that Bill was proposed, it did not occur to those (nor, thank God, has the case yet occurred) who supported and carried it through, that at any distance of time, a hardy Minister would arise, who, careless of every consideration of public good, should maintain his private interests by advising an intemperate exercise of a prerogative which must be attended with such fatal effects; who should secure his situation of Minister, by endangering the liberties of the people, and should save what was personal to himself, by wasting, with a shameless prodigality, the constitution of his country. Certainly such apprehensions, so injurious, so little probable in the event, could not be entertained by persons whose hearts were pure, whose intentions were righteous, and whose resources were not of that kind; nor if they had been entertained would they have changed their measures, or have desisted from them: for virtue is still immutable, nor do the good refuse to act because they are afraid of the crimes of the wicked.

But if we are desirous of beholding a truly sublime and affecting spectacle, let us pause for a moment, while we contemplate the conduct of his Majesty at this happy period of his reign, and upon this very occasion. Superior to every pitiful suggestion of a false and selfish policy, erecting

no separate interest from that of his people ; but feeling that their cause and his own were indissolubly connected, that the ease and prosperity of the one were the proper and only sources of the splendour and happiness of the other, he did not wait for an application from his Parliament, he did not consent to the measure—he demanded it. He saw, without being shewn, that a reform in such a crisis, and in such circumstances, was not only proper, but necessary ; and he was a volunteer in the service. Nor is his magnanimity without reward : For by how much affection, and love, and gratitude, are more to be coveted than every other possession, by so much has he gained, instead of losing, by the pretended sacrifice.

It is doubtless in the contemplation of a scene like this, that our affections, always warm, are most powerfully excited towards the King * ; nor, if we wish to retain impressions of the goodness of his Majesty's government, should we view him at the time when the whole nation was bent upon the termination of the American war, for such is the light in which this libeller falsely and injuriously represents him ; as bent upon the prosecution of that war, as regardless of the wishes of his people, as erecting an interest separate from theirs, and anxious to sacrifice both to the lust of personal dominion, or of fell revenge.

* Page 20, Sketch, &c. " Bent on the prosecution of a war, which was founded in the just rights of his throne, no symptom of change or alarm appeared in the Sovereign, &c."

In this train of affairs, when the nation had a right to look forward with exultation and hope to that change, that a virtuous conduct never fails to operate, certainly, but gradually, upon the stubbornness and malignity of fortune; the decease of the Marquis of Rockingham, which happened on the 1st of July, 1782, at once closed the scene; and a schism took place in the cabinet, by which the nation was deprived of the services of Mr. Fox, and Lord John Cavendish. It appears that the causes of this disagreement had existed even in the life time of the Marquis, though his authority, and a tenderness for his declining health, had served a little to compose that difference, that was, however, certain to break out soon into an open rupture.

That the majority of the cabinet had shewn some disposition to depart from that simplicity of conduct, by the expectation of which they had been first recommended to office, and that views of domination and conquest, quite inconsistent with the resolutions that had been the basis of the public existence of those ungrateful men, had began to mingle in their councils, there can, I think, be little doubt, as well from the statement of Mr. Fox when he declared the reasons of his resignation, (though perhaps he did not expressly say this) as from certain ambiguous expressions, such as that, "when the independance of America was granted, the sun of Britain was set for ever," and the like, which fell about that time from the
Earl

Earl of Shelburne, who had secured to himself, with great address and management, the office of first Lord of the Treasury; and being then the responsible Minister, it was not to be supposed, that, entertaining such sentiments, he would proceed in a system, by which such a mighty ruin was to be effected.

There is then every reason, as far as probability will determine conjecture, to believe that the old system was to be revived, and that the nation was to be again plunged in all those horrors from whence it had so lately seemed to have escaped; but the resignation of Mr. Fox, and of Lord John Cavendish, together with the defection of some who adhered personally to those two Gentlemen, and of more, who were guided as well by reason as by authority, and the alarm of all considerate men, declared in the most unequivocal manner the danger and the impracticability of proceeding in such measures, if any such had been adopted by the cabinet, or plotted by some of its leading and prevailing members, which latter there is the greatest reason, from circumstances, to suppose was the fact.

The resignation of Lord John Cavendish made room for Mr. Pitt to succeed to the situation of Chancellor of the Exchequer, a gentleman, who from his appointment at such an early age, for he was then scarcely twenty-five years old, to so high an office, and whose subsequent appointment with a small interval, to the highest, which he now

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continues

continues to fill, have rendered him the object of that kind of admiration that is the sudden and never failing effect of any singular appearance.

In all governments, in which the people have any share in the conduct of affairs, the talent of public speaking, as it confers the greatest possible superiority in popular assemblies, upon him who possesses it most eminently, is sure to be cultivated with the greatest care and industry : it is however maintained by Cicero, whose opinion upon this subject will be deemed of the last importance, that notwithstanding the pains and industry of many, combined with the genius of some, the efforts of all have fallen short, and that there is no such thing in nature as a perfect orator ; and he concludes upon the whole that there never will be such a phenomenon. Now such a conclusion with respect to Cicero himself is undoubtedly a just one ; but how far other men may be warranted in adopting it, is a matter which I think deserves some little examination.

For, as the minds of men are variously modified, as some are of a greater capacity than others, so is there a different standard of judgment in each. All judgment is by comparison, nor can we appreciate excellence of any kind, but by referring it, and comparing it, to something known. But the intellectual powers of any man, or what is the effect of the intellectual powers of any man, such as eloquence, for the greatest part, is, can only be referred, by the person who judges of it,

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to his own capacity, (I do not speak of attainment, for capacity exceeds attainment *, it cannot be referred to any thing external, for that which is external being not known, cannot be a standard of judgment. Hence it was that Cicero whose genius was the greatest, and the continual application and exercise of whose mental powers, had carried his attainments beyond those not only of his cotemporaries, but of those who had ever preceded him in cultivating eloquence; when he sought for an example of a perfect orator, he was obliged to deny its existence: doubtless he could not pronounce it perfect in others, which he was, himself able to excel; nor could he pronounce it perfect in himself, from a consciousness that he had not reached

* When I say that capacity exceeds attainment I must be understood to speak of that period of the human life, when nature has not yet begun to yield to the illapses of age, an effect that takes place much later in the mind, than in the body, probably because we have not so many, nor such direct means of corrupting it by intemperance.

And it seems moreover reasonable to think that the quality of the mind which is called taste, may be referred to capacity. We are often sensible of, and taste beauties, in works of genius, which yet we are not able to imitate, but why are we not able to imitate? for it is plain that there must be at least a conformity in the constitution of the mind that adopts, and the mind that creates an effect. The reason in this case is, because practice is wanting to secure attainment; the power which nature has given being only a passive power: which is the precise definition of taste.

the limits of nature, and that there was yet some interval between his attainments, and his power to attain: a consciousness, with which all but the most incorrigible blockheads are possessed, though none feel it so sensibly as those who are indued with that portion of the divine spirit which is denominated genius. He was therefore obliged, for want of any ground to repose upon, to take flight into the airy regions of possibility; and to deny the *actual* existence of that, which, from the circumstance of his own excellence, and of his own defect, he could only conceive *possibly* to exist.

It follows from this, that a person of inferior genius, and more limited attainments than the Roman, would be satisfied of the existence of that which the other denied: the same cause producing from the different circumstances of each, a different conclusion: he would not send his thoughts out in quest of possibilities; he would receive examples; and these examples would multiply in proportion to the little capacity and few attainments of those who made this matter the subject of their contemplation.

Now oratory in general may be divided into two parts: 1st, into the power that the mind has of calling up and arranging appropriate ideas; 2dly, into the power of expressing those ideas, or into elocution, which latter is the effect principally of habit and of practice, and affords the praise of *industry*: while the former challenges the admiration of *nature*. But oratory being conversant

fant with associations of ideas and their expression, let the ideas be never so vulgar and ordinary, if the elocution is splendid (as those who are poor endeavour to go richly habited) still it is plain that a species of oratory will have been constituted; and I think it may be inferred from what has been said concerning the different standards of judgment, that this species of oratory, however contemptible it may be to some, may yet be extolled by others when they feel that their own capacity has been exceeded by the powers of the Rhetor.

Another observation that I would wish to make upon this subject, and which I trust will not be deemed a contradiction to my former reasonings, is, that elocution, or phraseology, or the manner of speaking, as distinguished from true eloquence, is less fitted to meet with approbation among the rude vulgar, than among those who have the advantage of such an education as gentlemen of the present time commonly receive; but who do not possess that simplicity of taste which is generally the gift of a bountiful nature, though it is sometimes the reward of painful diligence. These who know just so much as to be acquainted with the difficulty of public speaking, are struck with art, the vulgar are pleased with nature: the taste of these is corrupted or shackled by a little knowledge; the taste of the vulgar riots in the freedom of ignorance. Great is the power of eloquence; great the power of the external sensible marks of eloquence.

eloquence. The pomp of language, the force of emphasis, the length of period, sentences involved in sentences, meaning artfully resembled or plainly exposed, and now a variety and now a repetition of terms—what person whose lips have tasted, but who has not drank deeply of the well of science, but is hurried away by the impetuous movement, and embraces with rapture the gaudy phantom.

I hope I shall be excused if I have engaged in this digression respecting eloquence, and the means by which we form judgments concerning it, and the cause of the difference of those judgments in different men: whatever relates to the art of speaking cannot be unseasonable, when the merits of Mr. Pitt are the subject of discussion. Yet it must be acknowledged, that in stating a case or narration, that Gentleman is easily the first; if indeed he is too minute; yet is not his audience intuitive; nor are his other means less accommodated to his end; if it is not prudent to expose a measure, who so capable of mysterious envelopement; if he does not answer, he decomposes, the arguments of his adversary, strips them of their fatal circumstances, confutes the remainders, and conquers in detail when it is not practicable to engage in the gross. If to these we add a graveness of tone, a pomp of language, a manner that imposes, an authority that commands, we shall find combined in this minister whatever an anxious nation can desire, to create
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and to secure its prosperity, and to adorn its annals.

But let not the voice of prejudice with a treacherous malignity conceal or obscure the merit whose existence it regrets, while it expatiates with the fondest pleasure upon the faults or defects of a hated object. Far, far from me be such a cause, or such an effect. I have even heard with delight, when Mr. Fox, having exhausted his subject with every variety of reasoning, that a capacious and a well stored mind could furnish; when having clearly satisfied all, *he* alone has appeared not to be satisfied; and stretching beyond the limits of possible conviction, has fallen short of his natural effort, and has not rejected arguments that were not necessary or that were weak—I say, I have heard with delight upon such an occasion the skilful ingenuity, and have applauded the dexterous discernment, of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; who has left no part of the adverse argument unexplored, has avoided or just *scemed* to answer what was strong; but has seized upon what was weak, as his proper prey; has attacked, has subdued, has exposed in triumph, has afflicted with a painful and lingering death, the object of his merciless victory, and has obtained a praise, not scanty, from the exuberance of his antagonist.

But to return: an administration which originated in fraud, which subsisted in weakness, and which proceeded in folly, could not be long-lived. While the Marquis of Rockingham was yet living
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and minister, one of the most signal naval victories that the history of this country can boast was obtained in the West-Indies, under the auspices of Admiral Rodney; and what seemed to render it more important, was the circumstance of its being gained in parts, where only disgrace had hitherto attended the British arms, and the ascendancy of France had been completely established by her continued and successive conquests.

St. Christopher, the glory and the reproach of the British commander whom Rodney joined, had but a little before surrendered to the fortune and perseverance of the Marquis de Boullé after a siege of considerable duration. When that island was first attacked, the English admiral quitting his station to windward came to its relief, though St. Christopher is situated low down in that chain of islands whose direction, in general, from South to North, bends with no slight deviation to the westward before you approach that scene of fruitless gallantry. With a fleet much inferior, but by a series of masterly manœuvres, he obtained possession of the very ground, where the French fleet had anchored, but which had slipped upon his approach, in order to seize the easy prey. But this ground was at the extremest distance from the fortress that was attacked, and where there was no communication, how should there be any relief? Had the British commander instead of remaining until the fortress surrendered, in the very spot where the prudence of Mr.

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de Grasse, would by a peculiar inconsistency of sentiment, have allotted him his station, returned from whence he came, as soon as he found his object could not be accomplished; the expectation of Vandreuil, and the fear of Rodney, (and the arrival of both was awaited at that very juncture,) would not have suffered the French commander to waste a precious time by continuing to leeward, when the junction of the one or the capture of the other or both, would be the necessary consequence of the return of the British fleet to a windward and customary cruize or station: and the conquest of St. Christopher must have been abandoned by the French long before the time that was necessary to complete it, to secure an advantage which was essential, and to avoid a danger which would have been fatal.

But by the victory of Lord Rodney, a mighty change was wrought in the affairs of those parts: those who had before attacked were not now able to defend, and that force which had diffused itself in conquest, though it had been concentrated in a single effort, would have ill resisted a vigorous assailant.

It is here necessary that I should a little dilate upon the nature of the victory of Lord Rodney, and that I should state what might have been its advantages in order to ascertain in this period of our history, how far fortune was seconded by conduct, and to determine in this particular the merits of an administration in which the sublime
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and early talents of a youthful Chancellor of the Exchequer were conjoined with the experience of a practised statesman : for it is to be remembered that this administration was publicly established in a very little time after the *intelligence* of that victory arrived, though its power of framing any system of action was probably established before it could have arrived its predominancy, being the very cause of the resignation of Mr. Fox, but however this may be, the fact of its being established so soon afterwards is sufficient for my purpose ; as the measures that were proper at that conjuncture ought then to have been pursued, by which means the war might have terminated honourably, and perhaps with some compensation, certainly without loss and disgrace to Britain.

The course of the winds in the West-Indies being regularly directed from east to west, and without any, or with an ineffectual, variation, it follows that where the position of the islands is in the same direction, the descent from island to island is most expeditious ; while the ascent is very laborious, and not to be effected but with a continual struggle, and by a most tedious navigation. Nor unless vessels are in good condition and excellent sailors, can it be attempted if at all, if the distance is considerable. Now St. Domingo with respect to the aggregate of the Windward Islands, among which are to be counted also what are called the Leeward Islands which are windward in this respect, is precisely in this direction ;
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so that the descent to St. Domingo is most expeditious, and is even the course pursued by vessels bound thither from Europe, which commonly make the Windward Islands in their passage, while the ascent from thence, particularly from the French part, is scarcely heard of; certain it is that an equipment from Europe would be more easily made, and more expeditious in its arrival. The defeat of Mr. de Grasse was in effect a double defeat. It was a defeat by sea, and it was a defeat by land. * Almost all the garrisons, as was notorious, were withdrawn from the French windward colonies, and embarked in the ships of war, for the purpose of attacking Jamaica with an accumulated force. But when this fleet was defeated and driven down to St. Domingo these troops were as far removed from what might have been a most fruitful scene of action; as if they had blown by some tornado to Europe; as if new equipments were to have been made; as if new dangers were to be encountered in traversing the seas, and a certainty of defeat or capture when they arrived at a blockaded port. In America an armistice had been concluded: the transports were ready, though the Germans could not embark, the British were eager, the passage was short, the prize was rich, the success not doubtful; revenge and compensation persuaded, and fortune invited

* The delightful and important colony of Guadaloupe had only a very few companies of a colonial regiment left in it.

the enterprize. Did the Shelburne, which had now established itself upon the ruins and disunion of the Rockingham administration, take any advantage of this conjuncture scarcely to be hoped, certainly not to be paralleled? Did the splendid genius of the new Chancellor of the Exchequer illuminate with a ray of light the darkness of the cabinet? By what fatal lethargy were their senses oppressed? Or, when they found the designs which public sagacity had imputed to them, and public virtue had frustrated, could not be carried into execution, did they revenge the safety of the nation by a malicious neglect of its interests?

For my part when I revolve all these things in my mind; when I consider that train of events that for some time back has been passing before us, and now continue to pass,—the disagreements of commanders—the surrender of armies—the conquests of Islands, the separation of a continent—the nations of the earth combined against one—the disunion of ministers—the insensibility and neglect of good fortune—despair cherished when hope might be indulged;—when I add to these a peace ingloriously concluded—equivalents not stipulated for cessions—attachment abandoned or requited by means subversive of industry, and fatal to morals, and the evil not even now expended, I cannot help comparing in their manner of operating, the moral with the physical world; in which we find that in plants or animals, if any taint has been received and incorporated, a vicious nature

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is propagated ; and it requires many descents many commixtures, much time, much gradual alteration, by addition, by diminution, by composition, by change of relations of parts, before the taint is removed, and nature restored : thus in the moral world, whatever causes are laid, a kind of nature is propagated in the effects of those causes, so that after much time, after many removes, and a long descent, a vicious constitution shall yet be traced in an extreme event, and the thread of evil drawn out through the more measureless distance *.

* It is hardly necessary to state that the provision for the Loyalists is appropriated from the profits of an annual lottery ; which is an evil not in itself, but inasmuch as it gives rise to the practice and furnishes means to the rage of insuring ; a rage that is as violent as it is absurd and peculiarly fatal to the poor and ignorant.

The thefts, the prostitution, the drunkenness, the despair, the suicide, which are necessary effects of loss and distress, in some natures ; are all a part of the same system of events with the American war itself, as without that war the circumstance would not have happened, by which lotteries have become a part of annual ways and means ; insurance is the effect of lotteries, and loss and distress a necessary effect, as might be proved of insuring to an inconvenient amount. With respect to all events being necessary, I would refer my reader to Mr. Collins's Enquiry concerning Liberty : and it is with pleasure that I announce to the public, that a very ingenious and learned friend of mine proposes to republish that scarce and invaluable tract, with the addition of a preface, and some account of the author, Mr. Collins, who was a profound and ingenious searcher after truth, and an excellent man.

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It was not probable that an administration whose inaction was guilt, and whose action was disgrace, should long sustain itself against the voice of reason, of pride, and of indignation. A vote of censure was carried in the House of Commons against the terms of peace, which were declared inadequate; nor could the perpetrators of that measure entertain any reasonable hope of extending their public existence under so much infamy. Yet was not the game quite given up: for a game it was. The Marquis of Lansdown, indeed late Earl of Shelburne, resigned; but Mr. Pitt, with a prophetic pertinaciousness, still retained his office of Chancellor of the Exchequer; it was even rumoured, possibly it might have been proposed, that he should succeed the Earl of Shelburne, as if the nation would receive such a substitution for an atonement and the resignation of one minister could expiate a guilty system. In this situation did the nation continue for full five weeks, without any ostensible minister, without any effective government, in a crisis of peculiar difficulty and distress, when a war was just concluded, when the treasury was empty, when engagements were pressing, when taxes were not productive, when credit was low, when a loan was wanted, and a general alarm had diffused itself over all ranks of people. His Majesty, however, at length, with a paternal solicitude, was graciously pleased to condescend to attend to the importunity of parliament, and to appoint an effective administration.

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This new administration, which took place in the middle of the session of 1783, was formed by a coalition of parties; and Mr. Fox, whose opposition had been long and bitter, and fatal to the administration of Lord North, was now seen to act amicably and jointly with him in the affairs of government: An event that made much noise at the time when it happened; that has been productive of a very extraordinary revolution, in the public opinion with respect to one of the parties, has been attended with some diminution of private esteem with respect to the other, and has been in its consequences extremely injurious to both. A great distance of time has now intervened; surprise or astonishment no longer impedes the operations of judgment; even prejudice has abated of its malignity, and does not reject, though it, suspiciously, hears the voice of reason and of impartial discussion; if therefore at a juncture so seasonable, I shall treat rather diffusely concerning that interesting event, I hope I shall not be deemed impertinent, or I shall receive indulgence.

In discussing the propriety of any measure, or part of conduct, there is no other way of appreciating its merits, or of ascertaining its defects or its pravity, but by mounting up to some general principle, and then, by considering that measure or part of conduct, relatively to such general principle: and the reason why men form opposite judgments concerning the same actions, is, because
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instead of pursuing that course, and referring to an immutable standard, each man forms a standard of his own, adapted to his prejudices, his interest, or his habits, which is, therefore, not only necessarily different in different men; but even varies in the same man, according to the changes that may happen in any of the aforementioned circumstances; a truth that we have probably all of us experienced, if only we had the candour to acknowledge it.

That wisdom consists in adapting means to the end proposed; is a position not to be disputed: and as wisdom will not propose any but a virtuous end, so the acceptance of this principle thus defined, will not only not pervert conduct, but will even be the proper standard of its beauty or deformity. Wisdom is conversant with all the actions of life, which as they are not less different in their nature than in their object or design, so must the means that are used in obtaining such different objects, be essentially different; so that what would be the effect of consummate wisdom in one case, would, in the other, be the effect of consummate folly. Now, the duties of man, I speak of civilized, social man, are twofold: first, there is a duty that he owes to himself; which may be called the selfish duty. This duty or principle, is an immediate derivation from nature, and is particular and limited in its operation. Secondly, there is a duty that he owes to the community, of which he
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is a member; and this latter duty which is the immediate effect of reflection, though it may be traced ultimately to nature, is general and universal in its operation. It appears then, that there is an essential difference between the objects of these two duties, one of which I have called the selfish, and the other I call the social, and indeed this is so much the case, that any great prevalency of the one, is absolutely inconsistent with the very existence of the other, prudence claiming an equipoise of both; but generous virtue not seldom forfeiting her reward by the prevalency of the latter, which, as its object is necessarily general, while the object of the former is necessarily particular; so are the means it uses much more enlarged and proportionate its greater scale of action.

If this distinction is just, it follows that where the public is concerned, a different measure of action is absolutely required from that which would be approved of, if only the individual were concerned. Let me endeavour to give this matter a little illustration. In the intercourse of private life, friendship and enmity, benevolence and resentment, are permitted to mingle; and the passions, yet under subordination, declare themselves with approbation, when the individual alone is concerned. In the heart, that is warm, nor artifice, nor simulation, nor treachery, nor malignity have any place, and though the individual is betrayed into indiscretions, and may

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suffer inconveniencies, yet is the general security connected with the particular evil, and what conduces to public utility the consent of all will approve. But it is no less certain that the interposition of the passions in conduct, is immediately connected with the selfish principle: We can neither love nor hate, we cannot confer a kindness, nor entertain resentment without indulging a propensity, and gratifying our nature. If in doing this we have abandoned an interest, we have yet enjoyed a pleasure, which we thought, upon the whole, it was better for us to enjoy, even upon what might be thought disadvantageous terms, if it were weighed in the scale of what is called worldly prudence. And this conduct will not only be approved of, but even demanded; because the principle is useful, and the inconvenience which may and most commonly does result, being particular, the public will not consider the event, but only the general tendency of the principle, and the security that it proposes

But in respect of that *system* of conduct, whereof the individual is only the instrument, and the event of which applies directly to the community at large; the case is widely different, and indeed diametrically opposite: When we forego a private interest for the gratification of a passion, a compensation of pleasure has been received for the sacrifice of an advantage; a compensation that is greater than the sacrifice; for if it were not,

not, we should, undoubtedly, forego the pleasure, and pursue the advantage, which would then be the compensation, since it is not in our power to enjoy both; one being the price of the other.

But if you allow the passions to mingle in public conduct; if, without considering the nature of the conjuncture, and what ought to be the determination of action relatively to that conjuncture, so as that the greatest benefit should arise from it; you should say, "This man has kept me long in a fruitless opposition: I have condemned his measures; I hate his person; whatever interests I may suffer, I will gratify my resentment; and though there is now no subject of disagreement, I will not unite."

What is this in fact but to make a property of the public, and to sacrifice the general interests to your own? Whatever course of conduct you pursue, you pursue it because your interests are concerned: and when you sacrifice your advantage to your resentment, you have still pursued your interests, not indeed rightly understood; and you have your compensation because you think you have it. But does the public enjoy any part of this compensation? Does your personal gratification diffuse itself through all the ranks and orders of men of which the community is composed? Are your feelings the measure of their feelings? Your good the measure of their good? Your existence the measure of their existence?

Vain and foolish thought! Know, that every bird that flies in the air, every beast that treads, every reptile that creeps upon the surface or hides itself in the bosom of the earth; and perhaps every part and particle of nature, has each a system of his own, separate and distinct from, though externally related to, all other systems. Like man himself who asserts his proud superiority, each has its interests to pursue, accommodated to its existence; each its passions to gratify: resentment, friendship, love, hatred, desire, antipathy, sympathy, are theirs. In what then does the excellence of man consist? It consists in this; that he has the power to break the prison gates of his particular existence, to expand in general contemplations, to send forth his thoughts to discover the relations of things, their fitness, their disposition to produce good under every possible combination; it consists in the power to abstract qualities from substances, and capacities from the gross objects in which they where, and by passing over whatever is particular and personal, to leave no room for prejudice or favour, or the passions to disturb the judgment, or render ineffectual the great object of his sublime inquiries. It is then only by such enlarged contemplations, it is by abstracting qualities and capacities, and using them without any personal regards, when the conjuncture requires it, that general good can be effected or secured. Whether we love or whether we hate, if these are necessary to
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the service of the community, of which each one is a part, and a no greater part than the meanest individual, there is an equal obligation to employ them, and any distinction in such a case would be vain and wicked.

But you will say, demonstrate as much as you please, the virtuous efficacy of these sublime abstractions of qualities and capacities from persons, have you yet shewn that it is practicable to do it?

Are we not conscious that the weakness of mankind is affected principally by sensible objects, and that even the knife which divides the skin and causes pain, though it is not an agent, is sometimes thrown away with precipitation, and its very sight becomes offensive. How then shall we be able not to hate the person whose measures, though at a time past, have been obnoxious, and the subject of a bitter and continued opposition, and hating the person; by what moral chemistry shall we separate his qualities and capacities, and employ them in the strictest union with our own, though it should be for the public service?

To this I answer. First, in general that if the propriety of such abstractions, arising from the nature of our public duty, which I have shewn, is essentially different from our private duty; one having the part without any regard to the whole, and the other the whole without any regard to the part, for its object, has been in any wise demonstrated; the possibility of them is demonstrated by that very truth: for a bountiful Providence
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has so adapted human capacity to human ends, that whatever is our duty, is possible, and not only possible, but easy also. Secondly, I say that this very weakness of mankind, which causes us to be affected so strongly by sensible objects, is an argument that answers as well my purpose as that of my adversaries, and is equally conclusive in either case: for when the measures that have occasioned opposition and personal hatred, if, we admit, the very illiberal position that these things are necessarily connected, have ceased to be; and a conformity of views of interest and of conduct has taken place; the same proneness to be affected by sense, which had before operated as a cause of enmity, will now operate as a cause of friendship; that very circumstance which is dogmatically stated as an argument why enmity should be perpetual, will occasion the engagements of friendship, and these notable reasoners will discover that they have argued from a consequence as it was a cause, and have confounded a general principle with a particular fact.

The amount of my theory upon this occasion, is, though that whenever the dilemma should be between the public service and private feelings, the nature of our public duty requires the sacrifice of private feelings to the public service: that whenever the dilemma should be between private interest and private feelings, the nature of our private duty, which may be defined, a sense of dignity, for without dignity there can be no virtue,

tue, justifies and even demands a sacrifice of private interest; nor is the selfish principle affected by this conduct, since, in the indulgence of feelings, a compensation is received for the sacrifice of interest, which is in no wise the case with respect to public transactions, the public being a party to the loss, but no party to the compensation; and I deduce from hence, that it is the confusion of these duties which occasions the wrong judgments that are formed concerning their means, and has been the cause of all that clamour against the union of Lord North and Mr. Fox, or as it is invidiously termed, the coalition, but which, if we try it by the test of circumstances, admitting the principles I have laid down to be just, we shall find to be not only defensible, but meritorious and honourable.

To suppose that every measure which is submitted to Parliament receives a judgment upon its own merits, that there is a total absence of favour, or of prejudice, no habitual concurrence nor opposition, that there is no bias from hopes frustrated; from views entertained, from personal, from public motives, from ill success, from misconduct, from imputed treachery, from national loss, or disgrace—were to suppose a state of indifference in men's minds, which will be no where experienced, but least of all in a popular assembly. The consequence of this condition of things is, that where several parties are formed in such a body, with opposite views, prejudices, and impressions,

pressions, and these parties are nearly balanced in power and authority; it is impossible that there should be any administration, or any government, without a union of some of them, and a total oblivion of former animosities. Such was the state of parties, and such the necessity of a junction at the close of last war. There were three parties in Parliament adhering to different leaders. A single one of these could not retain or assume the reins of government, for it was certain to sink under the superiority of the other two which would unite for its destruction: it was then a matter not of choice but of necessity, that two of them should unite in order to give stability to government, and effect to its measures. But how, or by which of these parties was such a union to be formed? Could either of these that was out, unite with that which was in? But they had both agreed in stigmatizing the conduct of an administration, which they declared had sacrificed the interests, and abandoned the honour, of the country by an inadequate and inglorious peace. Could either of these embrace in the very midst of its reproaches, and without any atonement from example, such a party? Could it say in the same breath, "Your terms of peace are inadequate, you have dishonoured, you have disgraced us: you have forfeited our confidence; but take us in, we will yet maintain you, only we will divide the gains." Should they not rather say to each other, "We have disagreed
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“ upon former points, but we have since that
“ fought the same battle; we have united with-
“ out blame to expel an administration, shall any
“ blame attach if we unite to form one?” A
union which is not condemned in one case surely
may be approved in the other. Such would be
the language of reason, and such was the conduct
of Mr. Fox and Lord North in this memorable
conjuncture.

There were moreover some circumstances at-
tending the composition of this administration
which has been the object of general reproach,
peculiarly agreeable to moderate and discerning
men: (and so different are the judgments that
people form upon the same subject,) the very
causes of disgust and horror in others, viz. the
difference in the principles upon certain great
questions of the two leading men in it, were to
them occasions of satisfaction and pledges of secu-
rity. It rarely happens that our opinions agree
precisely upon a theory so nice as that of govern-
ment in its most simple forms. But in a govern-
ment so blended as the British, the disagreement
is the more likely to happen in respect of the
greater variety and complication of interests, and
the adjustment and balance of power of each
branch, by the concurrence of all of which, and
by the influence of each upon either, the govern-
ment is constituted. To suppose that the frame
of the British Constitution is better calculated for
duration in an unchangeable state than any other
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more simple form of government, is an error which I shall take some pains to discuss in its proper place. The truth is, that there is no such thing as existence of any kind, whether of natural bodies, or of human institutions, without a contention of parts ; nor can there be a contention of parts without an alteration or change in the powers of those parts. How far an ascendancy has been obtained by any one, or by which of the parts of the British constitution, I shall leave it to the impartial historian, from a consideration of the measures and of the events his majesty's reign, to determine. But this is not yet to our purpose. Now, that which determines the course of government, in its future progress, whether to a more popular, to a more aristocratical, or to a more regal form, is the adoption or rejection of certain acts, such as are conversant with general policy ; and do not relate to particular measures arising from conjunctures, in which the action, and consequently the union, of ministers is absolutely necessary. And as the former are questions that do not impede the course of administration, let them be decided which way they may, so ministers who do not entertain the same sentiments upon them, do not only not unite but even debate and divide against each other whenever they are agitated, and the public business is not affected. It appears then that admitting the fact, that things should remain as they are, a diversity of sentiment among ministers openly professed

fessed and steadily maintained, is extremely to be desired, inasmuch as it is the best security against innovation, for the influence which ministers necessarily have being divided upon such occasions, there can be little danger of success to such an attempt from ministerial influence. On the other hand, if things should not remain as they are, and innovation should be deemed proper for the sake of renovation, this division of influence, at the same time that it might tend to introduce moderation, would not prevent a reform; for the votes of ministers dividing against each other, and the scales being nearly equal, a preponderancy would be secured in favour of public good, by those honest independent men, (and doubtless many such there are,) who being creatures of no party, influenced by no motives of private advantage, addicted to no authority, are able to exercise their pure, unbiassed, unprejudiced reason in the execution of their most important trust.

From such an administration then as the Coalition, a character of temper and moderation, and an assurance of perfect security to the present state of the constitution, or of its rational improvement, was most certainly to be expected by all men of discernment; who did not take words for things, and who deemed that coalition the proper object of their disgust and horror, whereby they saw Mr. Pitt linked in the closest bonds of union with Mr. Jenkinson, a name which has
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always been connected in public opinion, how justly I know not, with secret influence, with a clandestine government, and with all the series of disgrace and calamity which had so long affected this unhappy country.

These men judged, and they judged from a knowledge of the human heart, that the old system, if any such there were, might some day be revived with a double energy by such a union: that a splendid name, that popular beginnings, talents, which astonished by their early maturity, co-operating with the disgust that was conceived against the other coalition, might render Mr. Pitt a convenient ostensible Minister in the hands of secret advisers, and of a dark cabal; and that the public, dazzled by the blaze which surrounded the instrument of Government, would no longer see the means which before, it thought at least that it clearly, discerned, and excessive light would produce a fatal obscurity.

But whatever might have been the clamour of people without doors, and the discontent of some few within, the coalition administration, by taking in whatever of ability there was in all parties, and proscribing none, though some voluntarily excluded themselves, was both very strong and very well calculated by the uncommon unanimity that it inspired, for the very critical conjuncture, in which it conducted the affairs of government. During the remainder of the session, so fugitive is power that depends only upon
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the patronage of office, those who were so lately ministers, and now the opposition, scarcely dared to promulgate their weakness by a division; and whatever was proposed was carried almost without a cavil, if you except some few objections that were made to the terms of the loan; the bargain for which was precipitated, and an advantage taken of the great and increased pressure of the public exigency, arising from the continuance of the former Chancellor of the Exchequer, in office when his powers of action were extinguished, and during the time when the loan ought to have been negotiated.

The next session of Parliament, 1783—84, will be always memorable in the annals of this country, from the events it gave birth to from the extraordinary revolution it perfected in men's minds, a revolution that had began to operate from the date of the coalition, and from all the absurdities which grew from that fruitful parent; but above all, it will be memorable from the unparalleled circumstance of a Minister retaining his situation, in defiance of the efforts to displace him, of a majority in parliament; avowing himself the Minister of the Crown against the sense of the people, and yet retaining his popularity, and finally establishing himself, by the very means, when they turned in his favour, which he had resisted and defied, without any imputation of inconsistency in his principles or in his conduct.

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But yet if we turn a philosophic eye upon this jumble of events, which seem to set human reason at naught in its attempts to account for them from any fixed principles; if we consider the over-grown influence of the minister of the crown arising from a boundless patronage, and a dangerous empire over the hopes of man; the weight of great public bodies, and of vast masses of private wealth acting in concert, and under discipline, to obtain a given purpose; and, in fine, the prevalency of folly over wisdom, of error over truth;—we shall not be more surprised at this part of our history, nor shall we deem it a more extraordinary picture of human absurdity, than has before occurred in the history of our own, and of other, nations; in which we may generally observe, that the quantum of error may be measured by the quantum of violence of those who entertain it, and of the conviction with which they seem to be impressed of the truth and justice of their opinion.

The fame that Mr. Fox had acquired by a splendid display of talents upon all occasions, during a long course of Parliamentary services, commenced at a very early period of life, and continued without intermission; had raised very high the expectations of all men concerning the issue of the day on which he was to open his plan for the better government of India: It is not more than justice to add, that his achievement on that and the succeeding days in which his
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bill was debated, exceeded the expectations of all men. The bill met with a most violent opposition.

It was argued, that the taking the whole conduct of Indian affairs, civil, political, and commercial, from the courts of directors and of proprietors, and vesting them in certain commissioners to be appointed by Parliament, for a certain term of years, was a most indecent and outrageous violation of a solemn compact that Government, for a valuable consideration, had made and ratified with the East-India Company.

That by the charter of the company, the whole management of their affairs was vested in the said bodies with competent powers and authorities; but to substitute another species of government, was a direct invasion of these charters; nor did the evil rest here, for that the same consequences might be extended to the other charters of the kingdom, and the insecurity of all was established by the fate of one. That such violence was justly to be compared with that which was exercised in the dangerous reign of Charles II. when, on account of its virtuous opposition to the Court, the City of London was deprived of its corporate rights; nor did the other corporations in the kingdom escape the common ruin; and their charters being taken away or garbled, left the liberties of the people entirely at the mercy of the crown, by setting up a fatal power in that branch, of mutilating the representative body, or
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of imposing its own conditions upon the rights of election. That no necessity for so strong a measure had yet been proved; and when means less violent would serve, it was not only impolitic to pursue violent ones, but such conduct was a strong presumption of some wicked design, which did not yet appear. Such steps then, not having any commensurate object, should awaken suspicion, and excite alarm. That vesting the Indian affairs in Commissioners, to be appointed by Parliament, must have one of two objects in view (for it was thus variously argued.) It must increase the influence of the crown by giving it the Indian, in addition to its other patronage already too great; or, it must diminish the influence of the crown, by setting up a patronage in individuals, which ought, according to the legal course of the constitution, to be vested only in the crown, and rendering ministers quite independent of that branch of the government. Finally, that it would establish a fourth power in the state, an imperium in imperio. A monster in any government that admits it.

On the other hand it was argued by those who supported the bill, that by the charter of the East-India Company, a right of Government had been vested in that body; but it was a right of governing well; a right of governing ill, no power could bestow.

That all government was revocable for abuse; a principle not only just in theory, but recognized

nized by the *practice* of the British constitution. The fact then of the bad government of the India Company being admitted, as all the reports on the table were full of the usurpations, the rapine, the treachery of the Company's servants abroad; of countries desolated, of princes dethroned, of nations extirpated, sacred prejudices violated, and neither age, nor sex, nor condition, nor sanctity spared by unholy violence, and the perpetrators of these acts not censured, not recalled, not punished by their masters, but applauded and maintained for the fruit of their crimes—the taking the government out of such hands, and vesting it elsewhere, was a matter of urgent necessity and not of choice or deliberation. That no palliative could correct the evil; the constitution of government under the charter being radically bad. That the Courts of Directors and Proprietors were not the masters, they were the instruments of their pretended servants, or they were bribed by the participation of the plunder, in an increased dividend, to acquiesce in crimes at which their distance from the scene where they were perpetrated, did not allow the sensibility of their nature to revolt. That if it was necessary to substitute another species of government for Indian affairs to this vicious one, could it be so well placed as under the immediate control and inspection of Parliament, in responsible persons, and in a public execution of duty. That should some objections be started even against this mode, yet as wisdom

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consisted not in rejecting measures, because in some respects defective, and suffering the worse to take its course, but in selecting among different measures, such as were the least objectionable; if it could be proved that the mode now proposed was better than any other, the framers of it should have credit for the good, and the evil should be referred to the nature and constitution of things. It was asked, where should the government of Indian affairs be vested? Should it be vested without condition, or stint in the crown? This would be to increase an influence already too great. Should it be left where it was? This would be to perpetuate the horrors complained of. What too were the objections to the principle of this bill? That it increased, that it diminished the influence of the crown; that it established another power in the state. Against these it was urged that the two first objections, like affirmative and negative quantities, destroyed each other; neither could be very evident, or both would not be entertained; that with respect to the latter in particular, which was sustained upon this ground, viz. "that it gave an unconstitutional influence to the persons of the ministers, "by the appointment of their friends to the "commission:" the reasoning was fallacious and unfair, it was deserting a principle, and arguing from an abuse, which might, or might not exist; that a parliamentary act was to be understood to be completely such, and not an act of personal favour.

favour. That to extend this mode of arguing would be to dissolve all government, and to render the interpretation of every measure particular and capricious, instead of being general and stable. That with respect to the last objection of its establishing an imperium in imperio, it was an assertion, and not an argument, and an assertion adapted only to vulgar capacities to make or to receive. That if any such thing could exist, it existed in its worst effects in the present government of the India Company, those then who made this clamour, and denied at the same time that parliament should interfere, or wished to limit that interference with a grossness of intellect scarcely to be conceived, gave the lie to the object of their own argument by supporting a power independant, or in the greatest and possible independance of the supreme power of the state.

Which party was right upon this very important occasion, it is not for me to decide, the public has already decreed; perhaps the day is not far removed, when the same public, from a fatal experience of the effects flowing from a different system, shall reverse that decree with grief and repentance. The bill, however, passed the Commons by a very great majority; but being sent to the Lords its progress was at first impeded by artificial delays, and it was at length finally rejected in that house.

The means that were used to procure the rejection of the India Bill in the Lords, the secret

machinations, the midnight conspiracies, the insinuations, the whispers, the threats, the effect of these upon the conduct of some noble lords, who promised and withdrew their support almost in the same breath, and yielded to influence what honour should have maintained; are not touched upon here, or are slightly touched upon for the sake of preserving the thread of history. The author suppresses truth to avoid a libel.

Presently after this event, on the 18th of December, at twelve o'clock at night, the seals were demanded from the two Secretaries of State, who were dismissed from their offices. A resignation of all the other members of the cabinet immediately took place; and the appointment of Mr. Pitt to the offices of first Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer was announced to the public, together with an entire new administration.

We have now arrived at that period of our history which contains one of the most extraordinary political dilemmas that has ever yet, or as it is sincerely to be hoped, ever will be again experienced by this nation. There was seen at the same moment a minister, calling himself minister of the crown, and yet born up by a tide of popularity, such as had never flowed with more violence in its natural direction; there was seen, for the ample space of more than three months, a contention between prerogative and privilege; a minister maintaining his place, and yet denied to

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act; a House of Commons refusing every confidence to a minister and yet obliged to submit to his continuance in office; the fatal consequences that might arise from such a state of things disregarded, and finally a triumph of rashness over moderation, and a voluntary desertion on the part of the people of that body which is constituted to protect their rights, and which they could not abandon upon such an occasion without establishing the fatal conclusion that their own consent was not necessary to the continuance in office of a minister, or that if it was necessary, the House of Commons was not at every period of its existence the representative of the nation and the organ of its will. The first of these consequences we should find dangerous to liberty, as it amounts to little less than an acknowledgement, if we trace its effects, of arbitrary power in the crown; the second could not fail to produce all the anarchy and confusion which must flow from the dissolution, or the supposed dissolution, at any time, of legal government.

But as this matter involves a constitutional question of no small importance it deserves some discussion; let us enquire without passion, and let us judge with candour. In every civilized country a form of government of some kind is established; and whether it is simple or whether it is complex, whether it is a pure monarchy, a pure aristocracy, or a pure democracy, or whether it is mixed or compounded of all, or of any of these, such a government
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or constitution is binding upon the people, and they must accept of all its consequences, so long at least as they think their form a good one, and are willing not to change it.

Now the Government of Great Britain is composed of King, Lords, and Commons, and its beauty and efficacy is supposed to consist in very nice balances, so that one shall not usurp upon another, for the prevention of which each is armed with a negative; for experience informs us, and if it did not, our reasoning a priori from the nature of man would inform us, that there is nothing which the human bosom so fondly desires, or so ardently pursues as the possession of power, as there is then in these several branches, a distinct interest, so is there in each a principle of usurpation, which is precisely commensurate with the means that it has of executing its purpose, and the greatness of the benefit that will accrue to either upon the attainment of what it aims at.

In a country that is very large and very populous, and where the government is democratical, or in part democratical, such as it is in Great Britain and Ireland, the people never can be called upon collectively to take their share in public affairs. They can only do this virtually, that is by the election of certain delegates or representatives, of a number not too large to assemble and deliberate, and not so small as to lose the character of popularity. And these representatives must be intrusted for the term of their duration with powers very ample, for less
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would not be sufficient for the purpose of legislation, which is the highest act of authority that men can exercise.

In the contemplation of such a constitution, so soon as the representative begins to exist, the political existence of the elective body entirely ceases, and the voice of the people is as completely expressed within the walls of the House of Commons, as if it was delivered from the collected multitude upon some boundless plain.

This is the theory of our constitution: I am very far from saying that the case is in fact such as I have stated it to be; that it is not so—is an abuse; but while we preserve the frame precisely as it is, we must take all its consequences generally, for all are essential to the existence of the identical frame. It appears then from this statement, that a question between the crown and commons, if we admit of the principle of representation, without which our form of government cannot subsist at all, must be a question between the crown and the people: The commons and the people, constitutionally considered, being the very same thing.

Now if a question were proposed, thus: Has the crown a right to maintain a minister against the inclination, and against the requisition of a majority of the people of England, supposing the people could be assembled, and such majority ascertained? I should be glad to know what hardy stickler for prerogative

prerogative would think it prudent to exercise such a right; and a right that ought not to be exercised is no right at all; and if the crown could not exercise such a right in opposition to the whole people of England, but can exercise it in in opposition to the requisition of the House of Commons? My next question would be, Does the House of Commons represent the people? If it does, how will you distinguish those that represent, from those who are represented? Surely, you cannot do it; you might as well distinguish a guinea from twenty one shillings, whereof the value is the same, the appearance only is different. If it does not represent the people, then is the boasted form of government of Great-Britain, in that part where, with all its defects, it may be deemed by many to be the most unexceptionable, merely nominal and a mockery, and the people have been deluded for ages, with the appearances of freedom, when they have been the mere tools and instruments of their own servitude, the hewers of wood and the drawers of water to unmerciful task-masters.

But it is argued that in the particular case, the House of Commons did not express the wishes of the people, but the reverse as appeared very plainly from the subsequent events upon an appeal to the people, and consequently in the particular case; quoad hoc, the representation was incomplete, and the House of Commons, and the people, were not identical. Now such an
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argument amounts to this : viz. that the House sometimes does represent, and sometimes does not represent, the people. Shall I answer this seriously ? certainly, no ; I will not insult my reader. I remember a story that was popular at College, of a young man, who being examined previously on the taking his degrees, was asked, Whether the sun moved round the earth, or the earth round the sun ? The question was a difficult one, and how should it be answered at once ? it was better to be partly right, than entirely wrong, for prudence is more nearly allied to ignorance than is generally suspected ; and so after some time spent in considering, the answer, and truly a most notable one, was “ Sometimes the one, and sometimes the other.” Now I do shrewdly suspect that this same gentleman is one of the political reasoners who do so much honour to the present administration, *Agnosco stylum*, and who argue that the House of Commons sometimes does represent, and sometimes does not represent, the people : that is to say, while there is a majority in favour of the minister of the crown, and the parliament is quite implicit and obedient, the representation is perfect ; but if it becomes rebellious at any time, for instance, if it had done so upon this late occasion of the Russian war, then the representation would cease to be perfect ; and if in such a case as happened in a former one, the corporations which return so large a portion of members, could be persuaded that the safety
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of their charters was connected with supporting the minister of the crown, against the privileges of the people; there is no doubt but a dissolution would be attended with the same salutary effects; and a new parliament being purged of every thing that was refractory, would leave the minister to prosecute the Russian, or any other war, the causes of which the sanctity of his Majesty's councils would not endure, that profane curiosity should enquire into.

In truth, the character, the objects, the duties of public bodies are founded in unchangeable relations: so that if we maintain that the House of Commons is the representative of the people at any time, we must maintain that it is so at all times; if we deny that it is so at any time, we must deny that it is so at all times; while its constitution remains the same; we must deny the legitimacy of that branch of the government which is the pride, the boast, and the only security of Englishmen. That parliament then, which was insulted by the minister of the crown, and deserted by the people, was entitled to the same support from the people, that the last parliament was, or the present is, or any future one will be; nor did Mr. Pitt, when he maintained his situation of minister in defiance of the voice of that House, less violate a general principle of the constitution; nor did he less degrade the popular part of the government, or establish a less dangerous precedent, than if he had maintained

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it in defiance of the voice itself of a majority of the people of England, or if he were to maintain it in defiance of the voice of the present, or of any future parliament: for although the composition of this body is made up of fleeting parts that pass away, and are succeeded in the changes which gross matter is subject to, so that in one session it does not consist of the same, that it did in a former, or will do in a future session; and one parliament is not composed of the identical members that a former was, or a future parliament will be; as the gross substance of the human body is supposed to be entirely changed, so that at the end of seven years, not one particle of it shall remain in the same person; thus, though men may succeed men in one or in different parliaments, yet the body itself continues to exist; nor can, identity, be ever destroyed, where the spirit is immortal: and whatever indignity or insult, or injury has been at any time received, it remains indeliably infixed to future times and to future ages; not to be expiated, but by a solemn acknowledgement of the offence, and a punishment or censure of the guilty offender.

In judging, therefore, of the conduct of the minister upon this memorable occasion, we must abandon the particular fact, and we must resort to the general principle. If a minister, calling himself the minister of the crown, could wage open war with the representatives of the people,
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even with the supposed consent and approbation of the people, if he could maintain his situation in defiance of every effort to remove him, if he could elude their applications upon points of the nearest concern by evasions that are always dishonest, or insult their feelings by contemptuous silence—then is the fatal precedent set, and the House of Commons must ever after be deemed of the smallest importance, or rather quite insignificant in the scale of government, for the same conduct may be used to future parliaments, upon similar presumptions, and the authority of every one is diminished, and its condition degraded, by the same act; and if you should be startled at such a consequence, as I trust every lover of his country, and every friend to liberty must be, but should argue that the House deserved the severe infliction from its own misconduct on the particular occasion; I would just suggest, that a judgment concerning any particular fact, is only a matter of opinion, which is generally different in different men; but even admitting that all men agreed in a condemnation of it, yet when a general principle, especially such a one as vitally affects a constitution of government, and a particular fact, are at variance so, as that different consequences must be drawn from either, there can be no proof so strong of human weakness, of human frailty, or of human depravity, as to make the general principle give way to the particular fact, and thus to abandon whatever is sacred
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in laws, in politics, and in the order of nature itself.

But should it be urged (turning my own datum, with which I set out, against me, viz. that where power was divided in different bodies or branches, there was a principle of usurpation in each, arising from the constitution of man) that if at any time the Commons were to usurp upon the prerogative which the crown possesses, not indeed as a personal right, but as a trust for the good of the people; and therefore virtually a part of their privileges, would not a member of the House of Commons, admitting the fact that the majority wanted to innovate, act constitutionally, in avowing himself minister of the crown, in opposition to that majority, and in support indirectly indeed of the rights of the people with which the just prerogative of the crown is intimately connected. To this strong case (not that there is any kind of analogy between the case that has happened, and that which is now supposed, by way of argument, and to put this matter in the strongest point of view) I do not hesitate to answer no. For that it is safer that a particular inconvenience should be suffered, than a general principal violated. While the House of Commons subsists, there is, according to the terms of the constitution, an inviolable connection between that House and the people: to resist a majority of the representatives of the people, is to resist

resist a majority of the people ; for I defy you, with any political chemistry, to separate them in theory ; and if you separate them in fact, the danger to be apprehended is too great for any particular advantage, in any possible case to compensate, since nothing less than a dissolution of government may be expected, by extending this doctrine to a few more cases, and particularly to such wherein the Crown and the Parliament agree, for the people will then have no other means of redress, than by resistance and rebellion ; and it is a somewhat singular fact in the history of the present times, that in all the measures in which Parliament has concurred with ministers, in all the wars they have engaged in, in the taxes they have imposed, in the armaments they have countenanced, in the confidence they have lavished, the union between the people and their representatives has always been deemed complete, so as that the acts of the legislature could never be questioned : but in the single instance in which they have disagreed with a minister, their sense has not only not been deemed the sense of the people, but being the ground of a violent proceeding, the event has justified the measure. A strong proof that the electors are more corrupt than the elected, (since the latter, in the course of many years, have given at least one proof of independence,) and that in the present state of the
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representation, the influence without doors is at least as great as it is within.

But you will ask what is to be done in the supposed case, that the Commons usurp upon either of the other branches of the constitution? is there no remedy? no preventive to be resorted to? and must a base acquiescence permit the evil to take its course, and the government to be over-turned? To this I answer, that in such a case the crown is armed with the power of dissolution—that House is no more—and the question is now indifferent to be decided, only by the sense of a future parliament. Does the King call you to his councils? obey the summons: there is no declaration against you: you do no violence to the popular branch of the government: you do not despise its authority: you do not degrade its condition: And, let me add, that after having resisted for more than three months the sense of the Commons, and their endeavours to remove you, when you at last find your place untenable, and are obliged to resort to a dissolution, and the event of a general election, to secure it: you give up the point in dispute, and you acknowledge that a minister cannot, in fact, maintain his place without the consent of the Commons: for all the time then that you remained minister against such consent you violated a practical part of the constitution; you criminate yourself by the very means that you take to escape censure, and you stand self-convicted,

ed, that you may elude the condemnation of others.

And, in God's name, what was the fact? and what were the extravagant demands of the Commons which caused so much madness in the nation at this celebrated juncture? they demanded that the ministry should be persons in whom they could repose a confidence. In the transactions of private life, between two individuals, what is more common than for either party to object to an agent whom he thinks he cannot trust? and are the people of so little account, so base, so contemptible, that they shall not have the right of objecting, by the means of their only organ to the appointment of agents, in business that I had almost said was ALL THEIR OWN. Surely the people have such a right, if they have it not by the theory, they have it by the practice of the constitution; and any attempt to question or to subvert that right, in the representatives of the people, who must be so to all intents and purposes, if they are so at all. Whether it is made at this juncture, or whether it was made seven or ten years ago, or whatever particular circumstances it might have been attended with deserves, not servile and interested panegyrick, not the effusions of gratitude, not triumphant success, but animadversion, and reproach, and defeat.

There is also another matter worthy of observation upon this subject, and this is, that with
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respect to any struggle between the Commons and the other branches of the legislature, it is not only, in general, an act of political suicide for the people to desert their representatives; but there is a reason to be derived from human nature, wherefore an impartial judge, and one who was not at all concerned in the event of the affray, would be extremely cautious, not only in taking it for granted, but even in determining upon apparent circumstances, that reason and justice were not on the side of the Commons. For if it is true, from the moral constitution of mankind, which some have even confounded with the physical, that wherever power is distributed in different branches, each desires to increase its share, and obtain an ascendant and why this struggle does not sensibly appear in our form of government, I shall endeavour to explain in the subsequent part of this sketch) I say, if this is true, it is equally true that such a principle is merely selfish; and would operate with the greatest certainty and efficacy upon that branch, to which an appropriate conduct would produce the greatest advantage. Now as the House of Commons consists of a greater number of individuals than any other branch of the government, and consequently the power acquired by usurpation upon the others, would be less to each member, and, besides, as the tenure is uncertain, so as that he who is member to day, may not be so to-morrow; whereas in the other

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branches, the tenure is certain as to persons, and hereditary as to families ; so from these combined causes, we may be pretty sure, reasoning from the nature of man, that a House of Commons will not, in general, be the aggressor ; and if in such struggles it has sometimes forgot its moderation, and elate with victory, or smarting from the wounds it has received in the contest, or fearful of the future, from the experience of the past, it has pushed its advantage to an extreme length, such a conduct is the natural effect of human infirmity ; nor does it carry with it any proof, or serve to discover which of the three branches the crime of unjust pretensions is originally to be imputed to.

In truth, the whole of this matter is so plain to the most ordinary understanding, that no minister could ever have expected, I do not say to acquire popularity, but to escape odium, by maintaining such a cause, if other circumstances had not occurred, by which the passions of the people were inflamed, and their reason disturbed by the furious access. One cause, among others of this delirium, was the supposed danger of Corporate Rights all over the kingdom, arising from the pretended violation of the Charter of the East-India Company ; and as every corporation, by a vanity which is inherent in men, was fond of classing itself with a company, whose possessions were kingdoms, and whose authority was imperial ;
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and existing as they did by a charter, was derived from a common parent, and excited all the sympathy of consanguinity; so the cause immediately became a common one throughout the nation; nor is it wonderful that persons living at a distance from the scene of action, for we find that the electors of Westminster were still true to their cause, should be deluded by false statements; or even if they heard both sides of the question, that their pity should incline them in favour of the oppressed, while their fears should dispose them against the oppressors.

But if they had only for a moment considered how different the powers are which are granted by the Charter to the East-India Company, from those which were granted by their own—that their own powers relate in general, only to objects of convenience or regulation, within the little district of a close circumscription, that the community at large never can be deeply affected by any possible exercise or abuse of those powers, and consequently that no necessity can in the nature of things exist, wherefore their contract should be broken, and their charter resumed; whereas that the powers of the East-India Company were imperial, their authority extended over vast kingdoms, millions of people were happy or miserable in proportion to the good or the ill exercise of these powers; and that of the horrors of their government of their wars unjustly undertaken, of their violence

violence of their rapine, of their insatiable avarice, of their treacherous policy; there was not only no doubt, but an universal admission—I say if they had compared all these effects with the worst that could possibly flow from their own charters, they would have found that there was not only no resemblance between them, but that the same justice which had resumed the Company's, would have protected theirs.

Having conducted my reader to the dissolution of the parliament in 1784, and to the complete establishment of the administration of Mr. Pitt, by a decided majority in the new one; having endeavoured to account for the very extraordinary events which have been the subject of these few pages, from causes or motives that appear to me at least to be probable ones; having censured what I thought was deserving of animadversion, nor withheld my praise where I thought that praise could honestly be bestowed, and having judged in both cases with the freedom of history, and sustained my judgment by facts and by reasoning, not imposed it by insolent and dogmatical assertion; it may not be improper at this stage of my undertaking, and before I continue my sketch with the events which happened subsequently to the meeting of the new parliament, to enquire a little into the nature of this principle of resuscitation, which, as the author of the Sketch has observed, “ has raised England from her depression,

“ fion, and has enabled her, unlike other surrounding monarchies, to profit of her very misfortunes.”

If the case, that a nation should flourish in a time of profound peace, that her commerce should extend, her navigation increase, and that every symptom of prosperity should appear in an accumulating and redundant capital—were entirely new, so that the like had never happened before; we might with justice ascribe such a very extraordinary event to very extraordinary means: we might, overlooking the industry and the spirit of an illustrious people, and the security which a system of administration of justice peculiarly excellent proposes, to property and acquisition of every kind; quite disregarding the advantages that a beneficent nature has lavished upon this favoured island, its situation, its climate, its means of support to its inhabitants, whom both land and sea conspire to bless with every moral and physical causes—I say, we might search for this vivifying spirit, not in their plain insufficiency, but in the powerful efficacy of a minister, “ who, to incorruptible integrity and unblemished manners, unites strength of mind, severe œconomy, vigilance which never sleeps, eloquence to captivate, and vigour to subdue.”

But, for my part, though I am willing to pay every tribute of admiration to this rare combination

tion of endowments, wherever I am convinced of its existence; I should be extremely loth to degrade the nation, which it is my pride that I belong to, or the national character, so far as to suppose for a moment, much less to assert, that this one man can operate the wonders, though he ingenuously admits some trifling co-operation from other causes, which the author of the Sketch so lavishly ascribes to the object of his superstitious reverence. For though in despotic governments (and I do assure that author that the British constitution whatever he may think is not despotic), the sovereign power of one man has sometimes dispensed happiness over the land, and the ravages of despotism have yielded for a short interval to the godlike influence of virtuous sway, yet a country that is governed by laws, that boasts, and will maintain its liberty, is superior to the vicissitudes of particular characters: the prosperity of such a country is the effect of a constant cause; to say that it is the effect of the perishing nature of any individual, whether he be a minister or a king, is to libel the government, the laws, the character, the spirit of the people, and to substitute a cruel uncertainty to a certain expectation.

If there were no other proof of the operation of this constant cause, we should find it in the very enormous burthens which this nation has progressively endured for a century back, and ever since the

the practice of funding began. For though very little of the public debt has ever been discharged in the intervals of peace, and the nation has been much distressed at the conclusion of every war, yet we find it has always been able to engage in a new one with a renovated vigour, and to incur a fresh debt in addition to its former, to an amount that it never could have reached, nor approached, if it had attempted it, in the prosecution of the former. Now such an effect could only arise from the progressive state of prosperity, which the nation has been certain to enjoy in every interval of peace, by which capital has accumulated, and a vast auxiliary fund of property, of industry, and of consumption, which is the parent of taxes, has been acquired to supply the continually recurring exigencies of the state, and to furnish a new public estate to mortgage to new creditors whenever the occasion demanded it.

The case then of great national prosperity in a time of peace, is nothing new; and the author of the Sketch might have been satisfied with the good old causes, which, in a similar circumstance, have always produced the same effect; if the dazzling sun which irradiates the hemisphere, and vivifies our political nature, had not blinded his weak sight, or filled it in such a manner, as to exclude every other object.

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But in the national depression, during the calamitous war that the nation sustained, we should find a particular cause, independantly of the general ones, which are always sure to assert themselves in real effects, upon such a change of circumstances, as from war to peace; wherefore the *apparent* prosperity of the country should strike us with admiration and delight: the mind of man is most sensibly affected by *contrast*; it is not the gradual progress of good that strikes the imagination, it is change from evil to good; and the good increases in value, not in respect of its intrinsic worth, but in respect of its vicinity to evil. Any effects that could flow from peace after a calamitous war, though *reason* should pronounce them inadequate to such a cause, would be received with gratitude by *sense*; and the bare absence of evil would be considered as the presence of good. In the case of former wars, though the conclusion of peace relieved the public from accumulating burthens; yet victory and conquest still flattered the vanity of Englishmen, and the change from war to peace, was a change from one species of good, not indeed rightly understood, to another species of good; and the evil being not known, or far removed, was lost in ignorance, or diminished by distance, so that the good was not exalted by the contrast; but when the nation, in a little time after the conclusion of the last peace, had recovered its tone, and all the debt was funded;

funded ; when the redundant capital of the wealthy, instead of being consumed every year in the prosecution of a war, equally disgraceful and ruinous ; instead of leaving no memory of itself behind, except in the accumulation of taxes and the oppression of industry, was obliged to pursue another course, and to fructify upon land, upon industry, upon private credit, and upon public securities ; who was not struck with this new state of things ? Who did not enhance the good that was enjoyed from the consideration of the neighbouring evil ? But this new state of things was necessary ; it was the effect of no public regulation, of no political interference, which generally injures more than it does good : where capital accumulates in a country, and that country is in a desperate condition, where it does not, the price of every species of capital must increase from an increased number of purchasers, who lay out their annual surplus in the purchase of more stock. The prosperity of a country is the effect of this state of things, which must be found there ; when it is not, it cannot be created without the perseverance of ages and a revolution in manners and in policy : to say that it is the sudden effect, or that it is in anywise contributed to by the powers of any one individual, is to sacrifice truth to servile adulation ; it is to say that he is present in every man's bosom, that he animates his industry, that he is a party to his gains, that he
inspires

inspires with enterprize, informs with prudence, and, by a particular interposition in every man's private conduct, creates a general public effect, which can only be the result of the private conduct of all the individuals in the State.

But if we would enquire into the cause of national prosperity, which is nothing more than the sum of private success; I speak of the moral cause (for physical causes are doubtless possessed of a great power of co-operation), we shall discover it not in one man—not in a minister—not in a king—we shall discover it in twelve men, and in twelve men of no great seeming importance, who challenge no illustrious descent, nor appear with a splendour commensurate with their salutary and powerful efficacy; but who, generally speaking, improve their own property by an industrious application to trade or business, while they secure the property of others, by delivering, whenever it is litigated impartial judgments from a jury-box.

It is the security of honest acquisition, from the oppression of power or the injustice of corruption, that vainly wanders in quest of an object to fasten upon in the floating and uncertain judicature; which has ever occasioned, by a certain operation, the prosperity of Great Britain to be progressive; and unless industry is cramped by new impositions, and the State, by taking too large a proportion of the substance of the citizens, should crush activity

activity by despair, instead of suffering it to be excited by generous hope, a constant effect will be the never-failing result of a constant cause. Whatever doubts may be entertained by many very thinking men concerning the reality of political liberty, in the actual state of the British constitution, and in the *practica* of the government; of the reality of civil liberty, while juries maintain their rights, no doubt can be entertained: and as the individual is not, in general, grossly affected by the measures of government (I except indeed the case of the extension of the excise), in the complete enjoyment of civil liberty he enjoys a state which is commensurate with his views and objects in life, which is sufficient to stimulate industry, and to awaken enterprize, by a certainty of the undisturbed possession of the fruits of his success, and to make him contributory, by his private gains and advantages, to the sum of public prosperity, which, as I have observed before, and the observation cannot be too often repeated, is the result or agregate of private prosperity.

But before I dismiss this subject, there is a question that strikes me as not being unworthy of some discussion, viz. how far the advanced price public securities is a criterion of national prosperity. The cause of this advanced price is very well known to originate in the increased competition of purchasers, for there being more buyers than sellers, which is always the case in the time of peace; when

when no new stock is brought to market to defray the excess of expence arising from an extraordinary emergency, it is plain that the commodity must keep rising in value, an effect that is merely produced by this circumstance, and is totally independant of any minister or administration, though this too is absurdly ascribed to a minister by fond panegyrick; and I am the more disposed to hazard an opinion upon this matter, because it is of service to the community, that it should not draw any very extravagant conclusions concerning its prosperity, great as I admit that it is, from a fact which is generally supposed to be the best criterion, and thus by over-rating its resources find itself disappointed in their amount, when it stands most in need of them from its wild engagements in schemes of continental politics and ridiculous chimeras, about a balance of power which cannot now affect us, whatever it might have done in the time of the usurpations of France.

Now the nature of a public debt is to accumulate property in the hands of some individuals at the expence of the whole community, and its effect is to multiply capitals, and to encrease the value of every kind of stock, by bringing to market a greater number of purchasers for that stock. We will suppose for a moment that all that capital which has accumulated in the hands of the public creditors, who lent the whole of the money for the carrying on the last war, was totally annihilated

hilated and extinguished, and that those taxes which are now paid to defray the interest of that vast debt were also to be annihilated ; the probable consequence of such a state of things is, that there would be a less annual surplus over and above the expences of individuals, to constitute an annually accumulating capital, to go to market with to purchase stock. For the money that each person pays in taxes, to make up his proportion of the interest of this hundred millions, or whatever it may be, being paid distributively by the country at large, and falling in its great bulk upon the lower classes of people, who are the great consumers in the nation ; if their taxes were annihilated, it is probable that each person would live somewhat better than he did before, for the money saved by each by this means would be so trifling as not to form any object worth laying by ; besides that the poorer sort of people who subsist by labour, and whose aggregate consumption is the great fund for taxation, though each may pay but a little, seldom do lay by any thing, if they can make both ends meet, as they say, it being all that their situation requires, or their prudence affects ; and labour being the hereditary estate which they receive, and which they transmit, they are careless of every other fund, than that which nature has given them, and will preserve for their posterity. But if we reinstate the debt and restore the taxes, what is the consequence then ?

The taxes drawn from the whole body of the people would find their way into the hands of a limited number of opulent persons. The interest thus paid every year forming a very considerable object to such limited number, though it is nothing dispersed throughout the whole mass of the people, would probably accumulate every year and form a fresh capital: but this capital must be employed, and it must therefore go to market to purchase stock of some kind or other, which would continually rise in its price, by this continually encreasing competition.

And this effect would be perceived in its greatest force presently after the conclusion of a war, while the persons were yet living who had advanced the whole money for carrying it on, for the great masses of wealth remaining unbroken in their hands, would afford the greatest means of annual accumulations; though in time, when, from the necessity of nature, a distribution should take place, perhaps among large families, and the overplus of income would be reduced to the new possessors by the division, the effect would be much diminished; nor would the same symptom of prosperity appear in redundant capitals, though no one could say, that the nation was at all the poorer. I do not know how I can illustrate my proposition relatively to this matter, better than by supposing, that the whole of the public debt of this kingdom was the property of one man.

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He surely would be able to spend a very small comparative part of it: all the rest, to the amount of eight or nine millions a year, would be an accumulating capital for him to go to market with, to purchase some employment for it. In such a state of things, does not the imagination revolt at the price that he would give for land, and for every other species of employment of capital, rather than suffer it to lie idle and useless in his coffers? if we break this mass of property into as many parts as there are public creditors in the kingdom, it is very certain that the accumulation would be less; for twenty-nine thousand people, after paying their expences, would have a less surplus to carry to market, than one single man would; and again, if we were to divide these parts into as many others, as there are people in the kingdom, the surplus of eight millions of people, after paying all their expences, would be less to go to market with than the surplus of twenty-nine thousand; and though all would live better, the annual accumulation of capital would be much reduced; probably it would be none at all; but a general ease and affluence would be the consequence, and surely the nation would not be at all the poorer from being quite out of debt. Again, if we suppose, that instead of the nine millions to public creditors, the nation paid eighteen millions, we might reasonably infer, that the accumulations
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made by public creditors would, in that case, be the double of what they are now; and though the greater quantity of stock that would be at market in that case would something relieve the competition of purchasers. yet it would not equalize it; and it is probable, that the price of every employment of capital would be extremely enhanced: but nobody that is in his senses would deny, but the nation would then be in a much worse situation than it is in now: and yet the generally acknowledged symptoms of prosperity would be greater, for the price of every employment of capital would be higher. From these reasonings I conclude, that the price of the public funds is not a criterion of public prosperity, but might be the effect of a state of things that would demand a conclusion directly opposite to that which is usually admitted.

I have engaged more deeply in these observations than, a Sketch which professes to be historical, and to be conversant with facts, and not with speculative reasonings, can strictly be justified in doing: but I shall receive the indulgence of my reader, when he considers the different nature of a history which is contemporary with the facts it relates, from that which is conversant with facts, whose consequences are now obliterated, and of which a complete example has been proposed by a catastrophe of other facts; so that in that case, nothing is left to speculation, but every thing is proved by experience. In our case, the CATASTROPHE has not yet arrived: the chain is
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still continuous; what the future links may be, depends upon the prudence of the present moment; nothing is proved by experience, but every thing is open to speculation; and to reason, more than to relate, is the proper province of such a history.

Another real motive for entering pretty much at large into these matters, was to dissipate, if I could by any means succeed, the errors that prevail so much in men's minds, concerning the causes of public prosperity. That the nation is prosperous (though I am compelled to say much less so than is concluded from the criterion that is generally resorted to) I do most firmly believe, and I do most sincerely rejoice. But the cause of this is in the people, and in the laws; it is a permanent cause; it is not, and it never has been, in a minister. The best that a minister can do for the people, is to LEAVE THEM TO THEMSELVES, and his greatest possible merit is a negative one. I do not say but useful laws may be past which, by their general tendency and operation, may have a *remote* effect, for they can have no other, upon the industry of the people; but this I will say, that such an effect never can be produced by the introduction of excisemen into the shops, the cellars, the warehouses of any class of citizens, still less can it be produced by keeping the country in a continual ferment, and exhausting it by armaments upon every little trivial dispute; nor yet will a standing army, when the total alteration of the government of France has

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removed not only every cause of alarm, but even of jealousy from the only quarter where it could be entertained, and has rendered any army at all, for ought I can see, except what is sufficient to contend with the Suffex smugglers, quite unnecessary; be the best means of promoting the commerce, the industry, and the manufactures of the country. I say that a standing army *will* not be the best means of promoting these beneficial objects, because a minister ought not to be censured for not doing, what he has had scarcely time to do, for doubtless he will gladly seize the earliest opportunity of conforming to a conjuncture by which the people will be eased of such a heavy burthen, and the French revolution being now compleatly established, there can be no room for any longer delay; so that even this session may announce, or ought to do it, what his intentions are relatively to this measure, that the people expects, and the country from a total change of circumstances, has a right to demand.

END OF PART THE FIRST.



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